



CeCe McDonald accepted dedication of "Stone Butch Blues" from author Leslie Feinberg



a family of  
LGBTQ  
prisoners and  
"free world"  
LGBTQA allies  
who support  
each other



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Dear Friends,

Happy Pride Month! While mainstream Pride parades welcome Bank of America and other major corporations, Black and *Pink* will use this month to remind LGBTQ communities about the realities of incarceration. It was not all that long ago that Pride was a protest and prisoners were a key part of the conversation; it is our job to bring mass incarceration of LGBTQ people to the forefront of our movement today. While some are celebrating Barack Obama's support of same-sex marriage, I encourage us to be skeptical as he deports an unprecedented number of immigrants, expands the use of drone attacks, increases global incarceration, and yet uses same-sex marriage to his own advantage for votes and fundraising. We know better than to be tricked by this - marriage won't lead to anyone's liberation, marriage won't take prison walls down, marriage won't end health disparities, marriage won't find affordable treatments or a cure for AIDS. We have much to be proud of this month, pride in our LGBTQ, same-gender-loving, queen, king, kinky, homo, femme, butch, powerful identities. Be proud of your survival and your commitment to keep fighting.

Last month was a shareholders meeting of the Corrections Corporation of America. CCA is the largest owner of private prisons in the United States, some of the readers of this newsletter know the reality of CCA quite personally. At the May 10<sup>th</sup> shareholder meeting there was a resolution put forward to force the private prison company to release information about the prevalence of sexual assault and rape in their prisons. The resolution was brought forward by Alex Friedmann, a formerly incarcerated man and associate editor of Prison Legal News. Even though the Corrections Corporation of America own 67 prisons across the country, they voted not to commit to releasing information about sexual violence behind their walls. They chose not to spend even one dollar in this effort to address the realities of sexual violence and rape in prisons, but they were able to find \$4.1 million for the annual salary of their chief executive officer.

Many people in the Black and *Pink* family write in about their experience of sexual violence, whether that be at the hands of prison guards or other prisoners. It is outrageous that an institution like the Corrections Corporation of America would completely disregard the realities of prisoners. If you feel so inclined, you might write a letter to Damon T. Hininger, President and CEO CCA 10 Burton Hills Boulevard Nashville, TN 37215. Even if you are in a publicly owned prison, or a prison owned by Geo, feel free to take a moment to share your story with Mr. Hininger and tell him what you think of his profiting off incarceration of our family members.

I also want to let you know that Black and *Pink* has started a partnership with Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ). This relationship is beginning as a fiscal sponsorship, which allows us to apply for grant money and expand the programming of Black and *Pink*. QEJ is based in New York City and their work is focused on eliminating poverty with a specific focus on the needs of LGBTQ folks. According to their mission statement, "We do this work because although poor queers have always been a part of both the gay rights and economic justice movements, they have been, and continue to be, largely invisible in both movements." Their work parallels ours beautifully and this partnership will hopefully open new opportunities for both organizations and our membership. The Prisoner Leadership Circle was involved in this decision, and we will share more information as things develop.

Again, Happy Pride Month! June is a good reminder for us to look at our history and honor those who have come before us. There is much work to be done and we keep the fight going knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

Hearts and fists,  
Jason



## LETTERS TO THE BLACK & PINK FAM!

BORN THIS



My name is William, I was born in 1986 to my mother Brenda and my father William, who spent 17 years of my life in jail for a crime he didn't commit. DNA got him out of jail. Listen, my Grandfather was a bishop and my mother was a Preacher Daughter and when my Grandfather died, who kept us protected? My life went upside down. I'm going to speak these words loud and clear. I was born the way God wanted me to be, a homosexual. I used to dress up in my mother's clothes. Being born a big baby I could wear her clothes and shoes; I wasn't afraid to play the mother when me and my siblings would play house. I would play the Pastor when we played Church, but I stopped being a child at age 8 when I was sexually assaulted by my camp counselor and I was scared to talk to anybody. But that's not what this story is about. I will say this- being in a community where you come out, you have to worry if your family will accept you for who you are or if they're going to put you on the street. But don't ever think your mother doesn't know the truth. I was 13 years old after my leg healed from being hit by a car and this boy I knew for a long time wrote me a letter and gave it to a friend to give to me and ask me if I would be his friend. I was scared at first but we kept it off the beat, between just us three. And I was 13 years old when I first was in a relationship. All my friends knew I was Gay but the only person that didn't know was my family, who matters. I told my mother when I was 20 years old which would make almost 6 years on September 30, 2012. Will be 6 years ago my mother had a nervous breakdown when I told her I was sexually abused, but she forgave me and knew why I didn't tell her, but these words she told me- **Make sure you're happy and don't worry about what people say 'cause all that matters is how I feel, not what people think.**

God love you.

Juicy, Pennsylvania

## MY COMING OUT STORY

Hello to all my GLBTQ, my name is Linda aka Sun, yes Sun :) Well here is my C.O.S. I was raised in an abusive house and was sexually molested. My mom beat me for telling her I was getting molested. So I let it continue. Finally he left her, thank God. By age 8 I had already made up my mind, I wanted to be with a woman. I wanted that affection. I never got that from my mother. By age 13 my mother asked me was I a fucking faggot. I said yeah, and she beat me for 2 hours literally. I went through a crisis for a period. I had a desire for a child. I needed one desperately I don't know why. I got pregnant from a homeboy. I have always been a butch. Men seemed to draw to me. Yuk! Anyways, I had another child, my daughter, for my ex-girlfriend. She can't have kids. But I say all this to say no one can change who you want to be. No beating, or having a baby. I still hurt 'cause people now a days don't want affection and love. Or maybe I just haven't found someone who wants my affection and love. But I am gay, proud and I say it loud.

-Linda aka Sun, Texas

Dear Friends of Black & Pink,

My name is Jessie aka Jessica, and I am the only known queen of the unit (there are homosexuals, but most of them are in the closet). I've been receiving Black & Pink for a while, but my correspondence has been little. I do enjoy to write, yet I haven't been writing much. However, I am writing to share with other homosexuals/ bisexuals/ transgenderers/ etc... how I'm feeling, and if you feel down and depressed, then this may encourage you as well.

There are lots of suicides committed by LGBT persons, especially the gay young men, due to discrimination, prejudices, hate, and lack of understanding. Prejudice is to pre-judge, to judge without having knowledge, and many heterosexuals cannot fathom how love can extend further than just the opposite sex. But hate extends further than that....

Being locked up in Texas for almost twelve years, I had my first gay experience at the age of 15 and continued to have these sexual encounters until the age of 21, when I hit the prison system. I decided it was going to be my lifestyle and at 24, I also decided to be more feminine and become a queen (I'm 31 right now).

The thing is, now, I feel really lonely because guys frown on the makeup issue and other small issues, like sitting down to pee, and I'm in a Christian-dominated dorm, which makes it worse. I won't incriminate myself over the correspondence, knowing that it's monitored, but let me tell you- a lot of guys on the dorm (almost half), including mostly the Christians, are down with the game plan. They are "undercover brothers" and I can't tell you how many times I've been awakened during my sleep to be propositioned. There have been kites left on my bed from the same dudes that get hard while I shower. But during the daytime I have no friends but one. And he who is my friend is the only one true and genuine, not gay, but yet doesn't care what people think of him for hanging around with me.

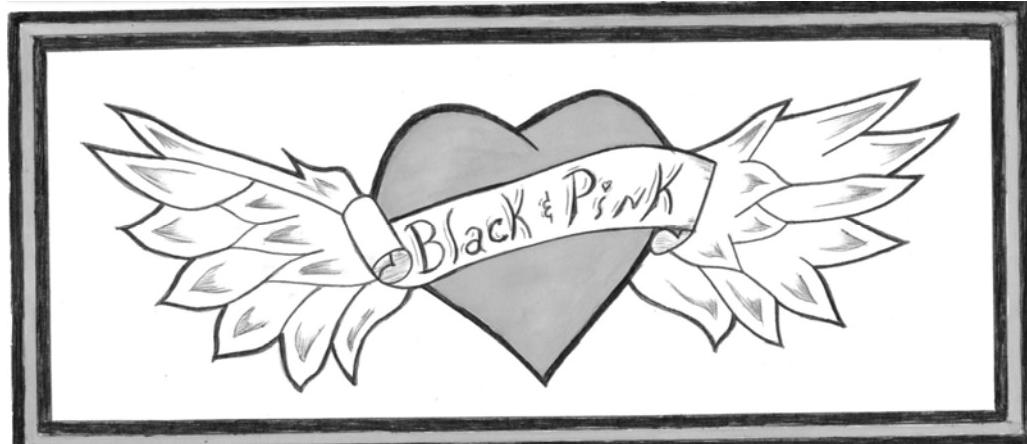
The thing is, young men and "ladies" of the rainbow, that hatred extends to jealousy and curiosity as well. A true homophobe mostly doesn't hate- they stay away. So many times I hurt because I let what others say get to me, but you must always be yourself. Don't let others determine your sexuality. Do what you feel is best for you. If you have a spiritual conviction, then that's between you and God. When it's all said and done, people are going to like you for who you are and must accept you for what you stand for.

Homosexuality is not just a sexual preference- it's also an identity.

**It's a statement that, "I'm different and am proud of who I am."** Prison systems are filled with homos/bis/trans/queens/punks/wolves and there are so many titles we're named for ourselves. Whatever you are called, you're still a human being- just only a minority. You have friends- but you just haven't met them all yet.

Not only is this assurance to you, but to me as well. I always have to remind myself that it's okay to be different. The world would be boring if everyone were the same.

-Jessica, Texas



Art: Chris W.

Hi, I'm KE . CHOW,

In reference to the article written by Mrs. ReeRee [February 2012], I for one am so familiar with the experiences that occurred to them. Let me first say that I am so sorry that happened. There's one thang that I do know for certain- that CDCR (California Dept of Corrections and Rehabilitation) will scrutinize any and everything that surrounds homosexuals and transgenders in prison. In a way, it's easier for them to demonstrate that they are tough instead of having to deal with more dominating prisoners. Also a way to demonstrate that they as CDCR staff don't care about our welfare or well being.

For an example of an experience that I had, when it comes to transgenders having any kind of relationship with people, it becomes a riot for everyone else and with CDCR C/O's 'cause they all find a lot of ways to make jokes out of it and ways to include others that are homophobic against the transgender and their lover. I went through the most tormenting situation to be with the man I love and was also with before we came to prison. With correctional officers, chaplains, librarians, etc, it was horrible how we were treated, separated and abused. When I was able to be with my man, I felt secured, protected, even respected by other inmates, but when things changed where C/O's didn't like how we were so close, inmates would see how they would treat us and figure that is was okay to "gay bash" and that's what happen to me in a dormitory housing unit. These gang bangers beat me up, broke into my locker, stole my property, and bashed up my color TV. When I called for help it never happen until I cried out that I wanted to do harm to myself. When the Lt. came to talk to me while I was still in the dorm amongst what had just happen with the guys that did that to me, when I told him what had just happen, he looked at me and walked away. I will never ever forget what happen. I was finally taken out of the dorm, a two minute investigation was done and I was told that everyone in the dorm blame it on me, that I did that to my own property. I was even assaulted by one of the guys that did bad to me right in front of two officers that were letting me pack what was left of my property and they didn't do anything. I was so weak and became sick and then my mental state of mind began to be so crushed, distraught to the fullest, and to this day, with a year and a half to go on my sentence, I will never be the same with interacting with people ever again.

Sincerely,  
KE . CHOW, California

Dear Black & Pink Family,

Mail from Cali, I'm Deon and I love the life and struggle to be and function as a community. I am currently a short term prisoner, Thank God, and am writing to say how much I appreciate you, all of you with Black & Pink. I've been in and out so many times I won't keep track or try.

Well Children, it is good to read about our continuous fight to be heard and respected as people. Congrats on the marriage issues!! Many have faced the same day to day problems of discrimination yet walk head held high. I for one will not lay down and take any injustice. So out in Cali there has been so many reports of rape and murder to our family while in prison, the CDC has now blessed the family with new laws and a clause that will help any who is being hurt or harmed in any way while in prison. We are a people. I can only pray that all across the states things change for us, and I do hurt with you who are in troubled situations.

**Don't give up and don't say I can't take it anymore.** I've been there, and wear the scars on both wrists to say I have seen those days and was willing to take my life to not see them again. Now I'm much stronger and think clearer. I trust in me and have faith that we are not here for nothing. Love is within and given to all who seek her. My gay mother use to tell me "You can only put one foot forward at a time." I am still putting that foot forward. To all the LGBTQ of the East Coast I send many kisses in greetings and hope to someday be around ya'll on Pride Day.

Love,  
Deon Kisses, California

Dearest B&P Family,

This is my coming out story. I am a 25 year old Bisexual male. I knew I was Bi beginning my sophomore year in high school during a physical fitness exam for ROTC. Me and another class member were changing in the bathroom and when he went to change into his workout shorts, he accidentally pulled his boxers down too. I then saw what beauty lie beneath all of us. My classmate was hung like a horse with 9 ½" of healthy meat. Ever since then I have played around behind my family's back with a few guys.

It wasn't until I was locked up in County Jail that I first met the "gay boy" who would take my breath away. I immediately was caught up in his beauty and intelligence. It turns out he was from none other than Boston, Mass. He was sentenced to 2 years in State Jail when I went home. We tried to keep in contact but then I was locked up and placed in a Halfway House. I ended up meeting someone else there, but me and him would not have relations due to my seizure condition.

I told my mother that I was Bisexual recently and am hoping for a good response from her. You see currently I am on a unit for G,B,T offenders here in Texas. There are 2 offenders who have stolen my heart from me, one is the most beautiful gay boy I have ever met, and it is understood by all that I would do anything for her. Even though she already has a partner, it is understood by me and him that I am truly in love with his partner. He knows that I will not impede on his relationship because I respect him and her. Don't get me wrong, I love her with all my heart and soul and I wish I could be with her everyday. But fate intervenes so much. There is another who I fell for but she utterly rejected me to the point where I no longer talk to her.

I am now open with my bisexuality, more than I was before. If I was as open about my sexuality in the past there is a good chance I would not currently be in prison. I had always tried to hide who I am but in the end my past was found out and I became a victim of rape here in the system. Now that I am in a safekeeping facility I don't need to hide who I am. There are many others like me who I wish would help me through the problems I still have. In the end I finally came out, it may have been the wrong time and place, but I am happy that fate made me do it here for a reason.

I stand up for all of us who suffer from being scared to come out and be who you want to be. Don't be afraid to say "I am Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer," because the longer you hold your true feelings in, the more depression and problems you will have. To those who are being bullied, tell someone you love and care about what is going on, 'cause the sooner it is stopped the less likely something violent may happen. Know that coming out is not a bad thing at all. We are who we are and we're not afraid to say it aloud- We're here, We're queer, and no matter what we're here to stay. Once again don't be afraid to be who you are, I am so proud to be the man I am today, ever since I came out my life has been so different.

I love you all.

Sincerely, In Solidarity,  
CRASH, Texas



## FIRE

When two lovers come together  
And the world explodes in fire  
It is only their desire  
For each other  
That burns fire Hot  
In beautiful flames of love  
This fire will only smolder down  
To burning embers  
For the flames will never die

-Rhonda, Florida



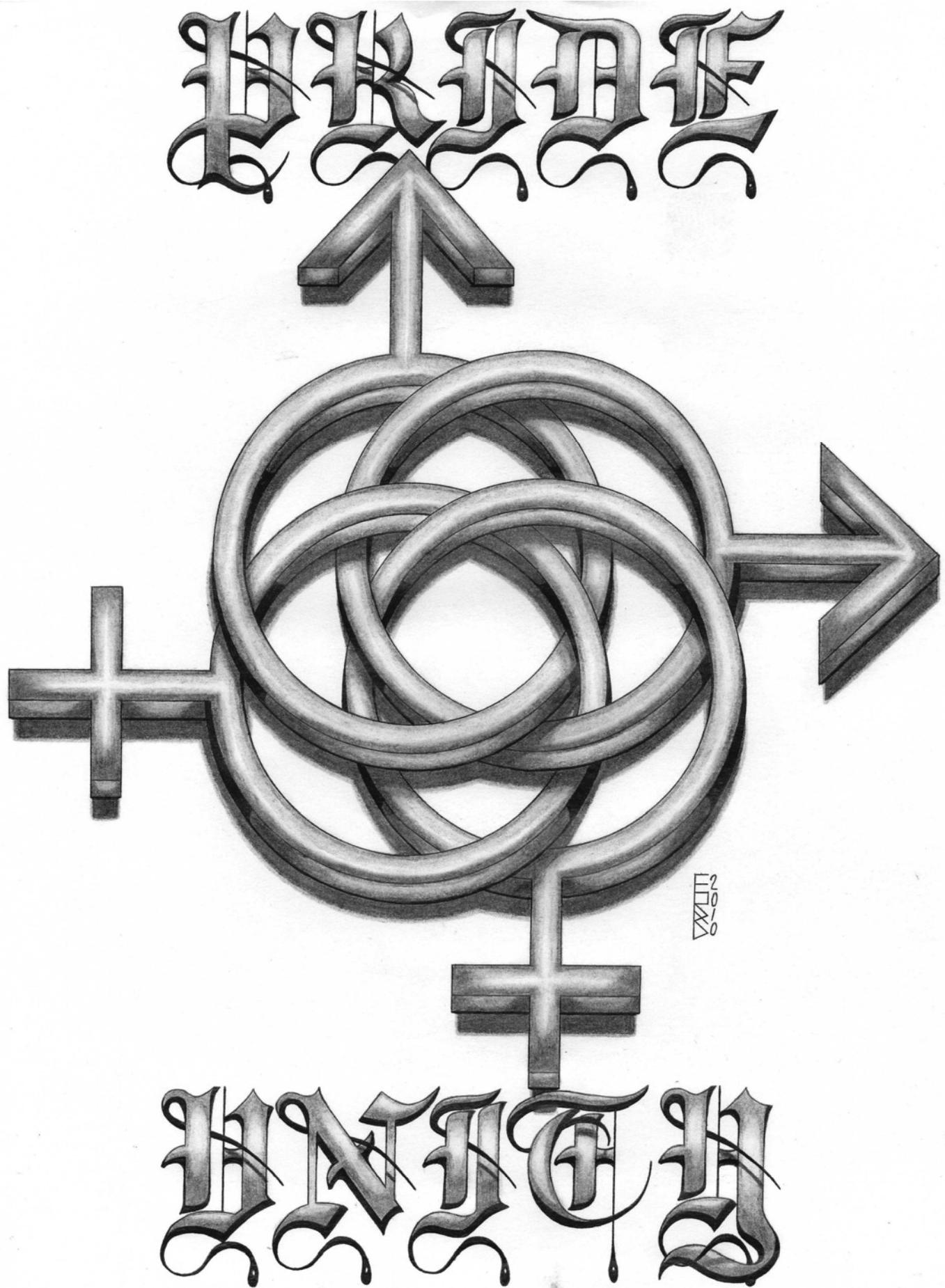
# PRIDE ON THE “OUTSIDE”

## TIMES ARE HARD

Times are hard  
When you're in a big cold,  
empty cell  
Wishing you was in heaven  
but it feels like you're in hell  
Times are hard  
When the one that you love so deeply  
is so far away  
A lot of pain comes with true love  
and this I must say  
Times are hard  
When the days seems like  
they'll last forever  
Hoping at night that you  
receive a letter  
Times are hard  
When everyone screams  
that they love you  
But as the man passes  
your cell with the mail  
he smiles and says fuck you  
Times are hard baby  
Yes I'm talking to you  
**Keep your head up**  
**And always know that**  
**I love you**  
Times are hard  
We will overcome and prevail  
over our enemies together  
Times are hard  
It's too late in the game  
to give in now  
This is the time that we must show  
the world what we're about  
Times are hard  
So think of me always  
when you are feeling down  
And I'm sure that I can  
turn that frown upside down

By Jack aka Speedy, Florida





Art: Hunter F.



## CECE McDONALD DESERVES OUR SUPPORT, ‘INNOCENT’ OR NOT

by Kenyon Farrow Friday, May 4 2012

This week CeCe McDonald, the young black transgender woman on trial for murdering a white man who'd attacked her and a group of friends, shocked many of her supporters. Many thought she'd plead innocent to the second-degree murder charges, since the weapon was never found, and the case against her is largely circumstantial. But instead of pleading her innocence at the beginning of her trial, McDonald accepted a deal and pled guilty to a lesser

charge of second-degree manslaughter. This case, more than any other of the numerous cases of black LGBT people accused of crimes after getting the better of an attacker, seemed to galvanize not only the transgender community and allies, but the attention of national press outlets...While many of us were hoping to see McDonald fight the charges and hopefully win an acquittal, I certainly hope that the transgender activists, the LGBT community and other allies don't abandon McDonald, as is so often the case when the question of being “innocent” becomes the framework for the investment of sympathizers.

It is true that McDonald was not out looking for a fight. On the night of June 5, 2011, McDonald walked past a bar with four other black friends in Minneapolis. She and her friends were attacked by two white women and a white man, first with words, “niggers,” “faggots,” and “chicks with dicks.” But the words, while enough to incite a response, were not the end of it. McDonald was struck in the face with a cocktail glass by one of the women, slicing all the way through her cheek. A fight ensued as more people joined in to attack the group of black folks, and eventually Dean Schmitz, the white man who was among the first to start harassing them, was stabbed and died later in the hospital.

Even if there is not physical evidence in place to secure the conviction the prosecutor originally sought, it doesn't really matter. A black person who fights with white people, even when self-defense is clear, is going to likely be arrested. This is often true also in transphobic and homophobic contexts, even when the violence is between people of the same race. The burden to prove one didn't deserve to die or be brutalized often falls on black, queer and/or trans bodies. In fact, McDonald's judge ruled that the swastika tattooed on Schmitz's body was inadmissible by her defense as evidence of his racist assault.

If McDonald in fact did respond to the verbal or physical assault, I certainly could not blame her, but too often this becomes the fault line that's drawn for victims of racialized and/or gender-based violence. When a straight black man in New York City was wounded after assaulting seven young black lesbians one night in 2006, even the white gay newspaper the now-defunct New York Blade offered an editorial, calling the women a “gang” and questioning their right to defend themselves. I often wonder if Matthew Shepherd had gotten the better of his attackers, would the New York Blade and others have opined on the question of violence in the case of self-defense. Last summer, when black queer punk performance artist (and a close friend) Brontez Purnell and bandmate Adal Kahlo were assaulted by some black Caribbean men in Oakland, a few people questioned whether Purnell had properly conducted himself in the moment. In Indiana just yesterday, a black gay high school student is facing expulsion because he brought a stun gun to school to protect himself from bullies. People will undoubtedly argue that his actions were “improper,” even though his mother reportedly gave him the weapon to protect himself. I am more twice his age, and my mother, often worried about my safety as a black gay man (and one of her best Black gay friends was murdered in 1986) has done the same.

But it's not just black queers who have to deal with the question of innocence, or what is the so-called “proper” way for Black people to respond to incessant threats. In the case of Trayvon Martin, in all of the media that came in the wake of his murder, very little was discussed about the constant levels at which black people, particularly black young people, feel unsafe in the world, despite the fact that they are always portrayed as the thing creating the possibility of violence for others. For example, it was reportedly said to McDonald that she was dressed in women's clothing to “rape” Schmitz that night. But I would imagine McDonald, like many trans and cis-gendered women, live with the fear — and too often the painful memories — of sexual violence. As a gay man who has been threatened with abduction by men of varying races on the street or in passing vehicles, I wonder if that was one of the fears Trayvon Martin felt, when he first heard the heavy footsteps of Zimmerman treading behind him in cagey pursuit.

The black person's fear of our own safety from violence (and certainly black mens' fear of sexual assault as one potential kind of violent encounter by police or someone else, *Continued on page 9*

# LESSONS IN BEING GAY: QUEER ENOUNTERS IN GAY AND LESBIAN PRISON ACTIVISM

Regina Kunzel, Radical History Review, Issue 100 (Winter 2008)



On June 28, 1970, the first gay march in New York City commemorating the Stonewall rebellion of the preceding year passed the Women's House of Detention. The march's route was not an accident. The jail was symbolically important, having held many renowned activists. Catholic radical Dorothy Day, labor organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and accused communist spy Ethel Rosenberg all had been incarcerated there in earlier decades. Radical feminist Valerie Solanas was held at the Women's House of Detention after shooting Andy Warhol in 1968, as were Angela Davis and Weather Underground member Jane Alpert in that same year. At the time of the 1970 march, two members of the Panther 21 group arrested on bomb conspiracy charges in a COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) frame-up — Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur — were inside the jail. The location of the Women's House of Detention would also have been meaningful to gay and lesbian marchers. Situated on a triangular block at the busy intersection of Sixth Avenue, Eighth Street, and Christopher Street near Sheridan Square, the jail lay in the heart of Greenwich Village and its flamboyant and newly politicized queer scene. Sheridan Square was a popular gay cruising spot and home to several gay bars, including the Stonewall Inn. The jail's downtown location had long invited a boisterous exchange between women behind bars and their friends and relations on the street. Joan Nestle remembered the "House of D" as "a shrine for separated lovers" where lesbians would call up to their incarcerated girlfriends late at night after the bars closed.

The permeability between street and urban jail that gave rise to that social and sexualized scene facilitated political connections as well, connections in evidence at that first march in June 1970. As the demonstrators passed the jail, Gay Liberation Front members chanted, "Free our Sisters! Free ourselves!" Expressions of solidarity among gay activists and prisoners became bolder and more reciprocal later that summer. On August 29, a march protesting police harassment began on Forty-second Street and proceeded downtown, concluding with a battle cry in front of the women's jail. Protestors on the street called up, "'Power to the sisters!' " and prisoners yelled back to the crowd, "'Power to the gay people!' " When demonstrators happened on a police raid taking place under the guise of a fire inspection at the Haven, a popular neighborhood gay club, they responded with rage, hurling bottles at police, overturning cars, looting stores, and setting fires. The riot spread upward to the Women's House of Detention, where prisoners threw burning paper through their barred windows to the cheering crowd below.

The Women's House of Detention was shut down the following year and demolished soon after. But political connections between lesbian and gay activists and prison inmates persisted as an important and underrecognized feature of the gay liberation movement of the 1970s. Many marches and demonstrations of the movement's early years chose jails and prisons as rallying sites. And beginning in the early 1970s, gay activists initiated a wide range of projects on behalf of prisoners they called "brothers" and "sisters," publishing newsletters, investigating and publicizing prison conditions, offering legal counseling, organizing prison ministries, sponsoring pen-pal and outreach projects, and assisting parolees. At the same time, prisoners, some of whom identified as gay, began organizing on their own behalf against discrimination, harassment, and violence.

The unity evoked in the chants of solidarity exchanged between prisoners and activists in the summer of 1970 masked much more complicated and at times fraught connections between newly politicized gay men and lesbians and prisoners who inhabited a sexual world permeable to but different in marked ways from the one taking shape outside. *This is an excerpt of the introduction to the article.*

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*Continued from page 8.* as in the case of Abner Louima, a black immigrant who was sexually assaulted with a broomstick by NYPD officers in a local precinct bathroom) is just not what Americans care to imagine. It's as if all the work done to re-frame racialized notions of public safety and self-defense by Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party have been lost to history. But the need for that framework is as necessary now as ever, considering the dozens (if not hundreds) of murders by police and white citizens of black people in recent years. McDonald may claim self-defense in the case of her manslaughter trial, but the legal strategy is not what interests me. She may have many reasons for pleading to the manslaughter charge, one of which, may be to just get this behind her, or feeling the inevitability of a "guilty of anything we choose" verdict. But what I hope is that whatever the reasons, and whatever her sentence will be, that LGBTQ activists and allies do not back away from supporting her over the question of innocence. She has the right to be free from violence, she has a right to defend herself, and we should continue to defend her too.

Keep in Touch w/ Black & Pink  
Black & Pink—{Insert topic tag here}  
c/o Community Church of Boston  
565 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02116



Help us by using these topic tags:

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Religion  
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Art Info Request & Submissions Only

Black & Pink Art c/o Reed Miller

*Apologies, friends, we are behind in  
replying to your letters. We are still getting there!*

200 Amory Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**LEGAL:** Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. “Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.”

**Lambda Legal, National Office 120 Wall Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10005, 212-809-8585**

Another resource to turn to, if you can afford the subscription (\$24 yearly, payable with new stamps), is Prison Legal News. This resource was co-started by a former gay prisoner and Men Against Sexism organizer, Ed Mead, though now it is run by Paul Wright. You can reach them by writing to:  
**Prison Legal News, P.O. Box 2420, West Brattleboro, VT 05303**

**SURVIVORS:** Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor.

**Ms. Chris Daley, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010**

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**Black & Pink’s New Fiscal Sponsor: Queers for Economic Justice!**